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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 THE HAGUE 002346

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [NL](#) [PREL](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: SEPT. 13-14 GAERC: READ-OUT FROM DUTCH

REF: A. (A) BRUSSELS 3897

[1](#)B. (B) THE HAGUE 2290

Classified By: PolcounsA. Schofer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Emboffs discussed Sept. 13-14 GAERC with MFA Political Affairs Department Director Jaap Werner on September 16. He said the the EU's foreign ministers had discussed Secretary Powell's comments about genocide in Darfur, the financing of the UN Protective Force in Iraq, and EU relations with Russia. He also described the problems the French had had with the ASEM package agreed at the Gymnich. See ref A for public GAERC conclusions. End summary.

Sudan/Darfur

[1](#)2. (C) Ministers are awaiting developments in New York, Werner said, and did not substantively move the ball forward with regard to imposing sanctions on Sudan. Werner opined that sanctions were discussed in general terms, but without a package of actual proposals on the table. Ministers primarily wanted to "send a message" to Sudan that sanctions are a real possibility if the situation does not improve. In addition to the expected discussion on Sudan, the ministers felt they needed to react to Secretary Powell's statement that events in Darfur constituted genocide. Ministers wanted to acknowledge that statement and called for the UN to investigate, Werner said, but would leave it up to the UN to determine whether genocide had in fact been committed.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The FM Bot trip to Khartoum, originally scheduled for Sep 9 and canceled when the Sudanese could not guarantee appropriate interlocutors, has not been rescheduled. It is possible that he will try to combine it with a trip to the African Great Lakes, mentioned as the "open troika" visit in the GAERC public conclusions.

Iran

[1](#)3. (C) Werner said that the EU-3 were more transparent than previously about their discussions with Iran, and garnered full EU support for their position that the critical IAEA should be November, not September. He made clear that the EU-3 do not believe that their efforts have run their full course, and stressed that the EU was prepared to continue to let them take the lead on this issue.

Iraq

[1](#)4. (C) The Dutch have received member state commitments for less than half the 26 million objective, but hope to be able to provide a positive EU response to the UN next week. This depends on negotiations now going on between Commission and UN officials about the EU supporting the "inner ring" as opposed to the "middle ring", thus avoiding the constraints on spending of Commission funds for military activities.

[1](#)5. (C) Some ministers were still very concerned about security in establishing an EU presence in Iraq or sending election observers. They do not want to position enough people to provide their own security, but they do not want to send in people without them being secure. (Werner acknowledged that this is a "catch 22" situation hampering progress.) The EU will send another fact-finding mission to Iraq shortly to develop further the proposals for EU activity. The proposals will be discussed at the November GAERC and hopefully endorsed by the Council.

ASEM

[1](#)6. (C) The GAERC officially did no more than endorse the package agreed at the Gymnich, but Werner reported there was some trouble getting the package from Gymnich to GAERC. The French believed that the language on the EU response to a Burmese failure to meet EU demands on human rights was too firm, i.e., the trigger for sanctions was too "automatic." The French claimed that the lack of the French foreign minister at Gymnich gave them the right to revisit the "trigger" language later, according to Werner, and had tried to weaken this provision at PSC and COREPER last week. Werner said the Dutch presidency was not prepared to make any

changes on this point and had succeeded in getting the "trigger" language approved in the GAERC conclusion. According to Werner, if the Burmese fail to meet all three conditions by October 8, the October 11 GAERC is expected to take the steps outlined in the conclusion. If there is a desire to soften the EU position, he added, the burden would clearly be on those seeking to change the decision to make their case, as the current position is that the EU will act unless all three conditions are met. On the other hand, Werner acknowledged that there would probably be some sympathy in the EU for responding positively to a partial Burmese concession in order to encourage progress.

17. (C) On another point of concern to the French, the financial sanctions language in the conclusion was tightened to specify that EU companies could not finance debt or equity in Burmese state-owned firms. This was genuinely a "technical change" (ref B) in that the French wanted to exclude commercial (trade) financing partly on legal grounds (and, Werner said, partly because certain French companies had transactions under way that they did not want threatened).

China arms embargo -----

18. (C) Werner said the embargo was not discussed either formally or informally. He expressed his personal view that neither the French nor the Chinese are pushing on this issue at this point, though the Chinese had brought it up in contacts in Beijing. He warned that this might be simply because Chirac had not focused on the issue recently, although he suggested he probably would in preparation for his trip to China. Chirac could also seek to create a "fait accompli" during his visit to force the EU and the Dutch presidency to respond. Werner noted that the EU has its Human Rights Dialog with China next week, and the October GAERC will evaluate the human rights dialog both with China and Iran.

Russia -----

19. (C) Although not on the published agenda nor in the published conclusions, the ministers did discuss EU relations with Russia, according to Werner. The Dutch raised the issue, partly in relation to the Russian reaction to Bot's comments at the Gymnich about Beslan and partly based on discussions at the Gynmich's lunch with candidate states, where Moldova and Ukraine received attention. Apparently at both the Gymnich and the GAERC, the new member states were vocal about their concerns vis-a-vis Russia. The new members reportedly drew attention to the fact that the EU's "Russia strategy" and friendly "neighborhood" policies did not take fully into account Russia's own, apparently different agenda for its "near abroad." More and more, they said, Russia appears intent on recovering influence in former Soviet space. Werner said that the ministers observed that Russia seems to prefer poor, weak and unstable neighbors, and was quite successful at playing EU member states off against each other. Werner noted that this general, "philosophical" discussion of the EU's Russia strategy would continue, next at the political directors meeting in New York, but he specifically said he would not yet term it a "review" of the EU's strategy.

SOBEL